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[REDACTED]
27 April 1964
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MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT: Briefing of American Ambassadors on U-2
Operations

1. Since the inception of U-2 overflights in the summer of 1956 there has been no written policy nor standard procedure with regard to the briefing of American Ambassadors - either in countries being overflown or in countries wherein U-2 flights originate or terminate. Each U-2 operation involving a foreign country is evaluated from the operational and contingency planning viewpoint and a determination is made, in conjunction with the State Department, as to whether the Ambassador should be made aware of the activity. We traditionally have deferred to the State Department on this question whenever they have expressed strong convictions with regard to any particular operation.

2. Generally, the practice has been to advise the Ambassador if we perceive some operational advantage in so doing, or in instances wherein his lack of knowledge might prove embarrassing should some mishap or protest result from the activity.

3. There are few instances of recall wherein the American Ambassador to a country being overflown has been advised of the activity prior to or during the course of such operations. It was not done in such cases [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] The rationale which led to this decision was predicated on the belief that it would be to the advantage of all concerned if the Ambassadors could honestly disclaim any knowledge of such operations should they evoke a query or protest.

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4. In a few cases, [REDACTED] protests or events have dictated the need to brief the Ambassador on past and future planned operations in his area of concern.

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5. Although it was not always so in the earlier days of the U-2 program (1956-1960), in recent years it has been the general rule to brief the American Ambassador in those host countries from where we stage, or in which we recover, U-2 missions.

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JAMES A. CUNNINGHAM, JR.
Acting Assistant Director
(Special Activities)

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